

From: Steve Scalise  
To: Whip Team  
Re: Biden's Border Crisis

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Last week, I led 10 colleagues to the U.S.-Mexico border to see firsthand the devastating national security, humanitarian, and health crisis that President Biden has created with his disastrous immigration policies. We met with Border Patrol and Texas Department of Public Safety agents to hear directly from them the dire situation along our Southern border. Their message was clear: this is a self-inflicted crisis created when the Biden Administration reversed proven policies that stemmed the flow of migrants.

In the Rio Grande Valley (RGV), U.S. Border Patrol is currently diverting 40% of their agents away from being in the field patrolling the border, and instead serving as glorified babysitters in the overcrowded temporary processing facilities. 700 Border Patrol agents are not in the field to interdict cartels smuggling drugs and weapons, or to stop human trafficking.

We witnessed hundreds of migrants who crossed the border illegally within minutes of us arriving near the Rio Grande River the first night we were there. Babies were held in the arms of other young children, who recently had crossed the Rio Grande. Unseen, but ever present across the river, were the cartels who ferried the most vulnerable like commodities.

At the Donna Processing Facility, we encountered thousands of migrants in overcrowded holding cells that were more than ten times the capacity limits. We saw children in tears who simply wanted to go back home to be with their families, but instead were in these facilities – with at least a 10% COVID positive rate – for over three weeks. Most didn't even know where they were going next.

We visited portions of the border wall where there are massive holes and construction has been halted by President Biden's Executive Order. A physical opening for the migrants, weapons, drugs, and terrorists that seek to illegally enter the country.

Throughout the trip, we met with our Border Patrol agents, who are honorably serving our country, but whose morale has suffered greatly through this crisis caused by the Biden Administration's open border policy. Yet, neither President Biden nor Vice President Harris have gone to the border to see for themselves the crisis they created. It is clear the Biden Administration's actions to roll back proven Trump Administration policies like Remain in Mexico, which stemmed the flow of migrants, has created a new surge of uncontrolled illegal immigration. President Biden must reverse his failed policies that created this crisis.

***“Serious national security risks”***

The Border Patrol agents are unable to focus on their primary mission of stopping the drug cartels and underscored with us the “serious national security risks” at stake as this crisis worsens. Meanwhile the cartels and gangs continue to smuggle drugs like heroin and fentanyl and other illicit goods, all while tens of thousands of others exploit the gaps along the border.

During our operational briefing with the Border Patrol, they also confirmed that at least six individuals who are on the terrorist watchlist that have been arrested at the border. Our agents have also arrested nearly 1,000 criminal aliens with felonies, over 100 sex offenders, and aliens from 22 different countries of concern.

### ***“The major pull factor”***

President Biden terminated the Remain in Mexico policy and axed the asylum agreements with the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. This is causing a disastrous effect along the border and Border Patrol is overwhelmed by the surge of migrants. Border Patrol agents highlighted the reversal of proven Trump Administration policies as “the major pull factor” for migrants coming to cross the border. The Obama-Biden policy of “catch and release” is back, and Border Patrol agents are forced to release migrants, many of whom have COVID, into our communities.

President Biden also is not fully enforcing Title 42 of the Public Health Safety Act to prevent migrants from spreading COVID in the United States. Since Biden took office, families with children under 7 are being dropped off at the McAllen Bus Station and released from custody. No COVID tests, no quarantines, no enforcement. Even more concerning is that the Biden Administration may completely end enforcement of Title 42. If that happens, Border Patrol told us the numbers of migrants crossing the border could skyrocket even higher.

### ***“Single busiest place I’ve seen in 21 years”***

This trip to the RGV showed us how dangerous the Biden-Harris Administration’s policies are for the families and young children who made such a dangerous journey. Border Patrol regularly encounter migrants who died on their journey, reports of abuse and rape, and inhumane conditions human smugglers force upon children. This has led to a humanitarian crisis where we witnessed crying children packed into crowded cells at processing facilities, forced to sleep on the floor inches apart from each other, all in clear violation of CDC guidance.

45% of UACs crossing the border do so in the RGV, and there we toured the Donna Processing Facility where the UACs and some families are being held. This facility’s capacity limit is 250; however, there were over 3,500 migrants in this facility when we were there. Border Patrol has held even more than 5,500 in recent weeks. One Border Patrol agent said this was the “single busiest place I’ve seen in 21 years.”

As we toured the facility, we saw the holding cells President Biden set up for young children. Each room is not supposed to have more than 50 people, 6 per cell, but they have had over 500 crowded inside each room. It was heartbreaking to see so many young children packed into these cells, laying on the floor, and many crying to return home to their families. Border Patrol agents are doing everything they can to address this crisis, but they are being overwhelmed by the sheer number of illegal immigrants they process every day.

HHS cannot process the placement of these thousands of children per day fast enough. These children are left at Donna for weeks, many for as long as 25 days – over eight times longer than

Border Patrol should have them in custody by law. Families are self-separating if they previously were expelled under Title 42 and sending their children with smugglers across the border. There were over 500 cases the RGV Sector documented of this happening. This crisis has created a multi-million dollar per day industry for the drug cartels.

They do not test migrants for COVID, do not have the ability to quarantine or isolate those that exhibit symptoms, many Border Patrol have contracted COVID, and sadly 28 agents have died from COVID. Not only COVID, but there have been other outbreaks at Donna from chickenpox, scabies, and lice. These scenes we saw at the border were shocking, and if these policies continue, even more families and children will be forced into perilous situations like we saw firsthand.

### ***“Effectively worthless”***

On his first day in office, President Biden halted all border wall construction. This is a violation of the law, and we are seeing the immediate consequences of this irresponsible decision. Border Patrol showed us how it is “effectively worthless because there are gigantic holes” that will not stop or slow down the smuggling. American taxpayers are still on the hook because the companies contracted to do the work are now charging the government fines because they can’t work.

Consequently, there are 14 miles worth of unsafe construction zones that have injured Border Patrol agents on the job, and there’s a serious flooding risk to 200,000 people living in affected areas because levees have not been repaired.

We know that walls work, and the Border Patrol was deploying the effective combination of border wall, personnel, and technology to have operational control of the border. However, President Biden’s Executive Order has undone all of that, and exacerbated the crisis.

### ***“This crisis won’t stop”***

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, there are no consequences, there is no deterrence, and there is no removal of the illegal aliens crossing our border. Without consequences, Border Patrol said this crisis won’t stop.

Our Border Patrol agents are pulled away from stopping drug dealers to instead babysit young migrants. Their facilities are dangerously over capacity, and there is a constant fear that the crowds of unlawful immigrants may spur a COVID-19 super spreader event. We have seen the devastating effects of these policies in person, and immediate action needs to be taken by President Biden to end this crisis, secure the border, and protect our national security.